

# Life of the Spirit

A BLACKFRIARS REVIEW



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## Life of the Spirit

A review devoted to the theology and practice of prayer and the spiritual life, it is designed to assist in the re-establishment of the Catholic tradition of ascetical and mystical writing in the English language. Contributors are therefore encouraged to submit original MSS. or translations from the Fathers.

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# Life of the Spirit

VOL. II

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INEXPRESSIBLE EXPERIENCE

BY

THE EDITOR



RECENT BOOK with the sub-title of 'Revelations of the Mystics'<sup>1</sup> gives us the opportunity of resuming the theme we opened in the August issue, the nature and meaning of mysticism. The book itself is a delight for anyone interested in spiritual literature; it contains many treasures, some familiar and many rare. The title of the book, *The Spear of Gold*, is taken from the exalted experience of St Teresa when the angel pierced her heart with a flaming spear of Love. The whole anthology, for such it is, is divided and subdivided so that it may lead from the first leap of desire in the natural heart of man to these high transports of love. But the editor sets aside the usual treatment according to the three stages of spiritual progress. He believes this treatment leads too steeply to the heights; but the result of his anthology is that its order is difficult to follow, and is more usefully used simply as an occasional book. The individual items even at the beginning are so imbued with the whole perfection of the life of grace that they cannot be regarded as mere steps in the development of the theme. The 41st Psalm, for instance, begins one of the early sections entitled 'The Restless Heart'; but it might well have come much higher up in any account of spiritual progress. The passages quoted however encourage, as the editor intended them to encourage, the reader to turn to the sources themselves; though the lack of any references except to the Scriptures is disconcerting for anyone who tries to continue his reading of Augustine or Symeon the Younger, Newman or Hopkins. With these qualifications the anthology is representative of a very wide range of literature and will be the source of enjoyment and profit to many.

But the point of interest here lies in the fact that the editor has intentionally included texts which are 'not mystical in the strict sense'; and these range from Plato to Léon Bloy, the Breviary and Missal to Don Luigi Sturzo. He uses Gerard Manly Hopkins as a means of introducing us to the meaning of St Augustine or St

<sup>1</sup> *The Spear of Gold*. Edited by H. A. Reinhold. (Burns Oates; 16s.)

Teresa; and he implies that the great experiences of nature are the material from which the real mystic experience arises. The very title of the book reveals that the editor intends the full mysticism of the Church to be understood in terms of experience. And here he would appear to agree with our August editorial which was taken so severely to task in the October issue by Fr Scott James. The latter accuses us of making the misunderstood word stand for 'feelings'. This was of course far from our intention as it is one of the first principles of the spiritual life to distrust feelings and to become detached from sensible consolation in prayer. It is also dangerous to insist too much upon the experimental element in the ascent to God owing to the unfortunate insistence, since the reformation, on religious experience as the ultimate test of prayer and religion. Nevertheless, once these points have been properly understood, we must agree with the editor of this book in regarding some sort of experience as necessary to mysticism.

This experience, as we have said, has no necessary connection with feelings and sensations, though it will often spill over into the physical world and affect the body in one form or another. Sometimes the Christian at prayer will feel a curious sense of elation, at other times it will be a stillness, at others even the burning sensations which were so characteristic of Richard Rolle. There are a thousand ways in which the senses are stirred by the inner experience of the spirit. But these are all purely accidental, and can appear and disappear without altering the reality within, except perhaps in so far as they provide a potential temptation to distract the mind from that true reality. Years of aridity and involuntary distractions are often necessary to keep the soul from running after these ornaments and temporal rewards. In the state of grace before the fall, no doubt, these feelings would have always been present because the perfect man would always recognise their true worth and never desire them for their own sake.

There are other experiences which sometimes accompany the ascent of the soul towards God. These are the unusual phenomena which are even more often wrongly identified with the essential mystical experience. Dreams, visions and locutions, ecstasies and levitations and such like, all these quasi-miraculous happenings are in no sense essential to the life of a saint, who by definition is understood to have reached the heights of mysticism. There are many saints who have had practically no extraordinary experiences of that sort, though in the nature of the case such saints are either very active or almost unknown. The active saints like St John Bosco or Cottolengo work miracles but they are not noted for the miracles, as it were,



worked on them by God who in the more 'contemplative' saints often produces such phenomena as ecstasy and stigmatisation. And the retiring contemplatives upon whom God does not bestow these abnormal effects do not usually make a name for themselves in the world.

But the true and essential experience of which we speak is common to all who grow up in saintliness. The importance of this book of mystical snippets lies primarily in the wide area covered by the editor's scissors. For he shows by his selection that the desires and experiences of the naturally good pagan such as Plato or Plotinus are not entirely divorced from the reality. The natural desire of the soul for the Almighty so profoundly expressed by these pagan writers should be the ground upon which the seed of grace is sown and which sustains that grace until it reaches the harvest home of Paradise. Again, the Scriptures so evidently play their part in this approach to the greatest experience that man could suffer, the experience of the beatific vision. They contain the first true images of that vision and consequently appear frequently throughout the book and conclude with such passages as

There will be no more night, no more need of light from lamp or sun; the Lord God will shed his light on them and they will reign for ever and ever. (Apoc. 22, 5. p. 369.)

It is strange that the editor has to say that the passages from the Bible are 'not mystical in the modern sense'; for, though the Scriptures are all too often left out of account in the treatment of the growth of the soul in grace, there can be no surer guide to the true experience of God than the Word of God as given to us through the authority of the Church.

Another feature of this anthology is the frequent appearance of quotations from the liturgy, both Eastern and Roman, which has also been often neglected in dealing with mysticism. There can be no true mystical experience without some reference to the Sacraments and the Mass, at least in regard to their spirit and inner meaning. And the true liturgies which continue the work of prayer and sanctification have been protected and developed by the Holy Spirit in such a way as to provide some of the most inspiring spiritual texts. There is for example the Responsory for the first Sunday of Advent:

Looking from afar, behold I see  
the power of God approaching and a mist  
covering all the earth.

Go forth to meet him and say:

Tell us if thou art he who as king  
shall rule the people of Israel. . . . (p. 23.)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The only reference given to this is '*Roman Breviary*'.

It would seem to be one of the great opportunities of the present age to be able to link up all the ancient heritage of liturgical devotion growing as it does out of the central doctrine of the mystical body of Christ with the more modern 'specialisation' in mysticism which is really of the same Spirit but which has appeared to be not only distinct but separate from the former type of spirituality. 'The texts in this book will show that the greatest of all mystics are those who rise to union with God and leave behind that aspect of mysticism which intrigues the world. Just as mysticism takes different forms in all its initiates, so it varies often from age to age, from mind to mind. . . .' (The Preface, p. xix). But the central theme runs through all the genuine spirituality of Chistendom. 'On God's part, I see Paradise has no gate, but that whosoever will may enter therein' (St Catherine of Genoa, p. 25). It is the universal vocation of mankind to ascend these heights and to walk into the open City which has only the steep ascent round it to protect it from the entry of the unworthy. On the summit of the mountain the heavenly city is open and free to all. And it is their home.

You will go home the sooner when

You find how small's the world of men

(Heinrich of Lauffenberg, p. 49).

In that homely city there must be experience of some sort. An experience which comes from God as a gift, which is not sensible, which is not merely 'extraordinary', and which can be received through the sacraments and Mass, through the reality of Christ's presence in his Church, through the heights of prayer. Some have described this as a 'touch' from God on the essence of the soul—perhaps it was to this that Fr Scott James was referring in his letter last month. There in the essence of the soul 'God will touch thee with his most simple being, without medium or similitude', says Tauler (p. 295). It is very difficult to describe what is beyond sense and beyond image. Those who have received the precious gift of infused contemplation know that it is inexpressible and yet experienced, an awareness of God which they cannot recall at will but which impresses itself upon them apparently without a close relation with the state of the conscience or their own virtue. St Jane Frances de Chantal describes the difficulty of expression:

There are souls among those whom God leads by this way of simplicity, whom his divine goodness strips so extraordinarily of all satisfaction, desire and feeling that they had difficulty in enduring and in expressing themselves, because what passes in their interior life is so slight, so delicate and so imperceptible, being all at the extreme summit of the spirit, that they do not know how to speak of it.<sup>3</sup> (p. 214.)



A man can be aware of the presence of God in this new way without changing outwardly and while retaining many of his own personal defects and weaknesses of character. Divine movements such as 'touches' and infused contemplation are thus a law unto themselves, unpredictable and inexpressible.

Experience itself of course is not a test of true spirituality, because experience is an individual thing which depends on the unique make-up of the man who experiences. The same doctrine and the same grace will have very different effects upon the imaginative man and the lethargic man, upon the poet and the prosaic man. That is where the poetic inspiration can play such an important rôle in the type of mysticism which finds its way into books, bringing an awareness which is more human while remaining as divine; that is why, for example, the majority of texts quoted in *The Spear of Gold* are of a poetic flavour and are not simply the bare bones of the doctrine of the spiritual life. The mystical graces are received by all these men and women in different ways. In so far as they are poets they have something in common in their appreciation and awareness of the experience; but in so far as they are saints individually the touch of the divine presence on the soul is a different touch upon each individual, as the kiss of a man given to his wife differs from that given to his child or to his friend. The reality in itself can only be understood in terms of the nature of grace, of the presence of the Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity in the soul, of affective knowledge working in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and in all the rest of mystical theology. That theology analyses the union of the soul with God and guarantees the truth of the experience. It does not bring that experience, however closely it be studied; but it does provide the tests. 'The revelations of the mystics' convey, in so far as it can be conveyed, the reality of the experience of the soul in its ascent to God, and that ascent provides a good and firm foothold all the way up to the heights. The foot should be always resting on a realisation of a good, from the natural good of the pagan philosophers and mystics, upon the good of the liturgy, the doctrine of the Church, the Scriptures up and up to the heights where 'there is a death in fruition, and a melting and dying into the Essential Nudity, where all the divine names and all conditions and all the living images which are reflected in the mirror of divine truth lapse in the Onefold and Ineffable, in waylessness and without reason'. (p. 312. Ruysbroek).

<sup>3</sup> Some of the passages have been given rather inappropriate titles. This one is called by the editor: 'Human Frailty'.

## D E A T H

BY

BEDE JARRETT, O.P.



NE of the things we have learnt from the intense study of nature is that behind every desire of man and of all living things there is some justification and some fulfilment. That whatever men have persistently longed for and desired has some reality. Nature does nothing uselessly. God implants in human hearts no desire however fantastic that has not fulfilment. Dreams in one generation become commonplace realities in the next. Look back a thousand years and read the dreaming literature of that period and now we have got beyond the dreams and live in the reality. Man is never satisfied. As fast as one desire is satisfied new desires spring from our mind. Man has always desired to live; he naturally hates death. There is a sadness connected with the last time he does anything. The last day at school; we may have longed to be free but when the last day comes we are sad. Always an element of sadness—last notes dying in the distance—sunset, and this is felt not only by men who write poetry but by all men. The old are just as desirous of life as the young, often more so, even though shut off and lonely with all they love gone; yet they want to live. Death is terrible. All are attracted to life for life is sweet to all. Our Lord in the Garden, a true man, shudders at the approach of death.

That desire that outlives all men, that desire for life has indeed fulfilment in eternal life. This isn't our life, we weren't meant for *this*, we don't fit in, we were made for another purpose. Scissors used to open sardine-tins will open them, but if they could speak they would say that they were not happy when used for such a purpose—they are not meant for that! We were made for something considerably better than this world; it would be terrible if we were only for this world, dreadful. If human beings were really contented they would die out, there would be no incentive. Man is driven always onward to find something better than he has got, and in a way we do; our homes are more comfortable, warmer than they used to be. Man is discontented because he was made for God. We put off, mistransplanting the desire at our heart. Bettering our temporal life never does satisfy.

Religious are not in this position: with us eternal life is consciously sought for. Conversion happens suddenly, sometimes perhaps early



in life, sometimes later. We realise as we never did before and say to ourselves: 'Why, this thing is going to pass!' We can almost see this working in the mind of St Paul: 'I reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to come'—'For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'. This conversion makes you safe to measure things by their proper standard.

Nothing here really matters, nothing is lasting, it all goes, we can't lean upon anything here, in all is an element of decay. No one book helps me for many years; it used to but now we keep it from sentiment—foolish, isn't it? In help even from this person who used to help me there is a flaw; if I lean too heavily I am thrown off my balance. And yet we will not leave such things alone! Books—pictures—prayers—none of these things are eternal; growth is their nature and therefore necessarily decay. Life this side of death all holds an element of decay. The longer we cling the more entangled we are and the greater the pain at parting. *Austerity* comes in here, austerity born of a sense of eternal life. Austerity sits loose from life—everything is passing—God only is eternal. Hold God, everything else as a gift of God. Some people are possessed of their possessions. One cannot take a house in every way suitable because a sideboard he has cannot fit in. Give it up—it's holding you, not you it. You are one of its possessions, not it one of yours. It's all wrong, isn't it? Isn't it dreadfully evident too in our lives? Things once a help, now a hindrance. It *was sacred*, a gift of God, now God asks it back for it is blocking our path, harmful to us, but if it goes we are perfectly miserable. What is *anything* added to God? If you take God away you take *everything*.

Nothing else really matters except God. We sometimes think how nice it would have been to have known our Lord when he was upon earth, to have walked the fields with him, to have heard his voice, guessed that it was he in the distance by his walk. What advantage was it to the Apostles? They all failed, badly. 'It is expedient to you that I go'. Even the human nature of Christ was to them a hindrance. It is God's way of dealing with souls, the price of greatness. This life doesn't matter, eternal life matters very much indeed. Conversion matters: think of the saints. Only when it really means something to us does God enter into us in an absorbing way. It seems cruel the way the saints acted—severe, isn't it? They tell us St Jane Francis walked across the body of her son to go to the cloister; cruel, unnatural. Ah! but there must be *no* attachment, always a certain aloofness, realising that nothing here matters *very* much. Even the

Sacraments are not essential. You can't hear Mass: what a terrible thing, isn't it? Is it? You have *God* and that is all that matters. If we have really got God nothing matters, for if we have him we are really rich. Is there any poverty where he is? We *can* forget, things distract us here, life is terribly distracting. The other world is eternal; this *must* go. So often the human, dying, failing things hold our hearts, but remember every single human being and created thing must go. Miserable creatures, we are trusting outward things, not resting on God. Our Lord came to teach us to do the will of his Father. 'I came to do the will of my Father'. 'Didst thou not know I must be about my Father's business?' 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do'. 'It is consummated'. The Father's will. Other things he lets go. He noticed Simon's slight, and feels it when everyone is against him; humanly he is hurt but beneath it is his hold on God. He was a king, not in a political sense but of all hearts. His reign is for all time, for ever. 'Have confidence, I have overcome the world'. 'But you are going to die, be jeered at by all—you conquer the world?' He is not judging by outside signs but by things divine. This is the essence of religious life.

We believe, we know, we live on the edge of eternity. What pains you, saddens you in life? things in time? what are you agitated about? We hold on to such petty things and they must all pass. *Hold on to God*. We should pledge ourselves to God, know *him*, not anybody else, not ourselves. Are you trying to? Can you honestly say you know God, that you make an effort, do you think you have really taken much trouble? You love other people; they will pass; if you love God that will not fail you—'nor height nor depth, nor any other creature'. All sorts of catastrophes and shadows will fall across your path but no creature can separate you from God. Your heart, never disturbed, will be at peace.

The eternity of our life is the *one thing* that matters. You have to give up your work—does it matter? 'When thou wast young thou didst gird thyself and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not.' Very hard. Is it hard? Why is it hard? *God only matters*. It is hard to be dependent on others, it hurts my pride. Yes, pride, vanity hurt. Ah! that's it! God only matters, his knowledge and love. See the joy of the saints, they weren't cast down, they were resting on God, he carried them and their hearts were at peace. 'Follow me.'

All things are passing, God only to the end. The Holy Ghost teaches us: 'It is expedient for *you* that I go'. All the thrill and charm of his human presence must go, the Holy Ghost can only come when that has gone. Mere feelings did help but must pass and



are hindrances if we hold to them. God wants us for himself. Don't rest in the gift but on him the giver. 'None else but thee, Lord.' Immense faith, abiding hope, eternal love. Sunshine or shadow, all are good for him. Conscious of God under all, we are poor but possessing all things. We should make the thought of eternal life something that steadies us; it enables us to put our hands down below everything and grip the hands of God. Faith helps us, hope helps us, Love—the Holy Ghost helps us, shows us life eternal. We are professed on our deathbed, this all passes, God never changes. God will be always with us even in the valley of the shadow of death. God fills *all* the world. There are not two worlds, but one world; and God fills the world and our heart.

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## THE SPEECH OF ANGELS

BY

WALTER JEWELL



**I**N a previous study concerning knowledge after death, we saw that men are the lowest of all intelligent beings, the infants of the spiritual universe. In this life knowledge has to be presented to us pictorially through the senses, for like children we need our crayons and our blocks.

We need them no less for expression. We not only look at pictures, but paint them. We respond to the music of life by striking its chords. No matter how profoundly spiritual the thought of the mystic, he must convey it, if at all, by lips and hands and images drawn from the material world about him.

This being so, how shall we view the life and speech of angels? We know them to be, not unions of spirit and matter, but purely spiritual beings. These intricate bodily organisms of ours are totally unnecessary to them, for angelic knowledge goes behind all colour, sound and texture to the inner nature of created things. This kind of knowledge is at present a closed book to us, although a book that death must open.

We should not suppose, however, that the glory and splendour of the earth and sky mean nothing to an angel. Scripture tells us that at creation the morning stars praised God together, and the sons of God made joyful melody. Angels, even more than men, marvel at the universe, but they do not approach it through sight and sound. Their mode of knowledge lies within, just as all their life is beyond the veil of the senses.

In our approach to them, we make much use of analogy and symbol. Knowing that space is no handicap to them, we put wings on their shoulders. Because spirit does not age, we stamp youth upon their forms and faces. The expressions we use to describe their life are born of the conditions of mother earth, and can be quite helpful if we see them as stepping-stones and not as horizons.

For example, we say that most of the angels *see* God and have their knowledge in that vision, without supposing for a moment that they have bodily eyes. For ourselves we frequently use the expression: 'Oh, I see', not meaning that someone has switched on the light, but simply referring to the clearance of some mental fog which has obscured the train of thought. If we can talk of seeing when we mean a spiritual operation, we need make no rule against discussing the sight of angels.

A similar situation arises when considering angelic speech. Should we employ that term at all of pure spirits, or would it not be better to depict heaven as filled with eloquent silence? There is no doubt that silence can be most expressive. We know the silence of lovers and the hush at High Mass when the organ and choir pause for the consecration. Yet silences of this kind are, in reality, a form of speech. We use them, knowing that they definitely convey a message from one mind to another.

In our thought we have kinship with the angels, and to understand their speech we must look within ourselves. There we find, underlying all our outward expressions, the fact of interior speech.

This inner conversation is quite a normal experience. Consider a father settling down to assist with his son's homework. Some, at least, of the knowledge that he requires is stored within the depths of his memory. But he seldom reverts to it, having more immediate problems than the campaigns of Julius Caesar in Gaul. By an act of the will he has to reach into his memory and draw up into present consideration those shadowy figures of the past. He thus connects his boyhood with his manhood, instructs himself, and carries on an internal conversation.

By a further act of the will, he makes known to his son the result of his efforts. But to do this he must array his thoughts in speech—they must be conveyed on the vehicle of his mother tongue. Both father and son are profoundly united to intricate bodily organisms which provide the normal and proper means of communication between them. The spiritual must move along the paths of matter.

But among the angels this necessity has never arisen, save only when they have had some communication to make to the world of men. They have deep and far-reaching knowledge within themselves, and can and do determine to bestow it upon other spirits lower in



the scale. Knowledge and will suffice, and spirit enters into direct communication with spirit.

In fact, one angel enlightens another in the very act of his approach. There is already warmth in a man's body, but if he sits before a fire, the heat embraces him and he is warmer still. In a somewhat analogous way a spirit finds enlightenment and power when embraced by another of a higher order.

The spirits who see God see also the world which he has made, and read creation in the Creator. But with angels, as with men, there are varying perfections in the beatific vision, and so the wide variety of all that God has made is not appreciated to the same extent by all. The higher angel needs to 'break up' his knowledge and give it out in a particular manner to lesser beings who, though spiritual like himself, are less comprehensive in their grasp of knowledge. Thus all 'make the first circle' in eternal truth, and are yet able to pass truth to each other.

In heaven all knowledge is held in common, and the position could not be otherwise. God having given himself so richly and intimately to all, the spirits possessing him could not fail to form a perfect community and to be fully available to each other. And so the light falls generously from order to order of the blessed spirits, being made understandable to each of them as it descends. From the highest seraphim it flows to illuminate at last the lowliest disembodied soul of man in heaven who, although he really sees God, can yet learn from spirits who see him better.

We might note here that the angelic interest in man is acute in all the orders. He is the union of spirit and matter, the two great fields of God's creation. In the Incarnation God himself became man, but never an angel, and his human mother is the Queen of heaven. Man is the infant of the spiritual universe, but even here on earth we all tend to become the servants of the baby. Neither should we forget that grace can make men equal to the angels, although I do not propose to enter into that mysterious matter here.

St Thomas introduces a curious little question. He reminds us that in the vision of Isaias the seraphim *cried* to each other. A voice is usually uplifted in order to cross an intervening space more effectively, and so he asks whether the angels speak under the conditions of local distance. He replies, of course, that angelic speech is intellectual, and that the 'crying' signifies the greatness or intensity of what is being conveyed. A further consideration is that there really exists a distance between the angels, even those belonging to the same order, although not of a sort that can be measured. This distance is covered by the wordless speech of an angel raised in spiritual strength and power, and directed to the lesser spirit receiving it. He,

enlightened and profoundly interested, makes his response, and there is true conversation in heaven.

When one man wishes to speak to another he attracts his attention, usually by a brief word or ejaculation. But there is nothing corresponding to this in the language of heaven. In God the spirit sees the angelic hosts ranged in beauty and power, and is at once aware of any approach to himself. These approaches are frequent, because, as we have seen, knowledge in heaven is common property. The food gathered by the higher spirits is at once passed to those below, and made palatable to them by angelic art. There is something particularly satisfying to the mind in the thought of angelic teachers, and we can be sure that beyond the veil of sense they are waiting for us, their prospective pupils.

Angelic conversation can be quite private and personal, for the wealth of knowledge available to all can be taught individually. And so the question arises as to whether an angel, or the soul of man for that matter, can enter into personal conversation with God. If spirit converses with spirit, what of the supreme creative Spirit?

The idea is awe-inspiring, and our first thought is that nothing quite so individual is to be expected. But then we remember that God's treatment of his creatures is intensely individual. Examples leap to the mind like individual creation, personal salvation, the holy Eucharist and the confessional. Further, every angel and every soul in heaven holds his own particular place in that scheme of things in which God is adored and served. There are millions of angels, but no mere duplicate of any angel. Even the soul of man is a particular gift from the hand of God, and is different and distinct from its fellows. Every created spirit is, or should be, a religious order in himself. He is made by God for God, to serve him with all the individuality and peculiar powers that are his. The spiritual universe, like the material, is designed and ordered. Divine Wisdom does nothing without a perfectly good reason, and every spirit has his proper place in the divine economy. In consequence, individual conversation between God and those spirits who see him in his essence is to be expected. Moreover, God has work for the angels, of which services men have had personal experience. Who can doubt that Raphael, Michael and Gabriel had received definite instructions from the heart of the beatific vision, and had responded in that wordless speech which is the language of angels?

The speech of the angels is to become ours. Death alone will bring this about by introducing us to the spiritual realm and the spiritual tongue. It is true that we are not accustomed to direct speech from spirit to spirit without the use of word, gesture or symbol. But it will not be beyond our natural powers, although less natural to us



than the use of tongue or pen. When we die, we shall certainly direct our mental concept outwards, as we have always done, yet without robing it in the fashion of speech. The answer will come in the same manner, and we shall appreciate it.

But of course our hope goes far beyond this. In the beatific vision angelic speech takes on the cadence of the divine, in the sense of being beyond all natural powers, and we are invited to join those conversations. By grace we may hope to speak to God and in God with familiar ease, and to 'hear' that voice in obedience to which the entire universe entered into being.

## A SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS<sup>1</sup>

BY

THE VENERABLE BEDE

(Translated by Vincent Kerns, M.S.F.S.)



TO-DAY, dearly beloved, we are celebrating the feast of all the saints in one joyous solemnity. Those saints whose fellowship is the delight of heaven; whose protection is the joy of earth; whose triumphs are the Church's crown; whose confessing of the Faith glows brighter in esteem, the braver their torments made it. For the harder the fight the greater the warriors' glory; and many and varied are the sufferings which furnish the triumph of martyrdom. As the severity of their tortures increases, so too does the reward. Our Mother, the Catholic Church, extending far and wide throughout the world, was clearly taught by Christ Jesus, her Head, to fear neither insults, nor tortures, nor even death itself. Strengthened ever more and more, not by resistance but by endurance, she was the inspiration of the triumphal glory of all those whom the penalty of imprisonment brought together in a glorious army, with one and the same ardent courage to fight the battle.

O truly blessed Mother Church! so resplendent with the honour of God's esteem, so radiant with the glorious blood of triumphant martyrs, arrayed so splendidly in the dazzling virginity of their unsullied confession! Neither roses nor lilies are wanting among her

<sup>1</sup> Migne: *Patrologia Latina*, vol. xciv, col. 450. (*Homiliae Bedae Venerabilis Subditiciae*—hom. lxx.) Extracts from this sermon form the lessons of the second nocturn for the feast of All Saints and within the Octave in the Roman Breviary.

flowers. Let each one strive now, dearly beloved, to be really worthy of both prizes, of the two crowns: that white as snow from the pure and chaste, and that purple-hued for those who suffer. Both peace and war have their own flowers in the armies of heaven, and with these the soldiers of Christ are crowned.

For the unbounded goodness of God, which it is beyond words to express, has also taken care that the span of trouble and strife should not be prolonged, should not be made tedious or never-ending. Instead, it should be short, lasting—so to speak—but for a moment. It is this brief and tiny life that will contain the trouble and strife, while the crowns and the rewards of all our merit are in that which is eternal; the troubles will speedily come to an end, but the merited rewards endure for ever; the darkness of this world will give place to a vision of most beautiful light, and to the possession of a happiness greater in measure than the bitterness of all earthly sufferings. The Apostle gives proof of this when he says: 'Not that I count these present sufferings as the measure of that glory which is to be revealed in us' (Romans 8, 18).

With open arms the heavenly city receives the returning warriors, greeting in them the bearers of the trophies of a conquered foe. It is not only victorious men who come; women, too, have their place in that procession, who have prevailed over their sex in addition to overcoming the world. Virgins, there are, and youths, doubling the glory of their warfare, surpassing by their virtues the tenderness of their years. And entrance into the palace of that eternal court is not for them alone; it is afforded also to the rest of the multitude of the faithful, who in peaceful union have kept the faith intact, firmly and unshakeably instructed by God's commandments.

So come now, brethren, and let us enter on the way of life. Let us return to the heavenly city in which we are enrolled and inscribed as citizens. 'You are no longer exiles, then, or aliens; the saints are your fellow citizens, you belong to God's household—heirs of God, sharing the inheritance of Christ' (*Ephesians* 2, 9; *Romans* 7, 17). The gates of this city are opened to us by fortitude, and courage will afford us a proud entrance. Let us contemplate, therefore, the wonderful happiness of that city, in so far as that is possible: for, indeed, there is no language capable of describing it.

It is written somewhere of that city that 'there will be no more mourning, or cries of distress, no more sorrow. Can anything be happier than that life, where there is no fear of poverty, no weakness or disease? Where harm can come to no one, where no one can be angry, nor envious, where inordinate desires cannot be fanned into flame? No one can be tormented there with the desire of honour or the seeking after power. No fear there of the devil, no snares there



of evil spirits, for it is far removed from the terror of hell. No death there, either of soul or body; but life, rendered delightful by the gift of immortality.

‘There will not be any discord then, but all things will be in harmony, and mutual understanding between everyone; for there will be one harmony of all the saints, peace and joy binding everything together. All is serene there, and at rest. The brightness there is perpetual; it cannot be compared to our sunlight, for its blessedness makes it shine more brilliantly. Because that city, as we read (*Apoc.* xxi, 23; *Daniel* xii,3), has no need of sun to shine in it; the glory of God will shine there, and the Lamb will give it light. There shall the saints shine as the stars throughout an unbroken eternity; and those, too, whose lives are a lesson to many, shall shine as the brilliance of the vault of heaven.

‘And so there is no night there, no darkness, no gathering clouds, no extremes of cold or heat, but everything perfectly regulated—“things no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart conceived” (*1 Cor.* 2, 9), except those who are found worthy to enjoy these things, whose names are written in the book of life, and who have “washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb and stand before God’s throne, serving him day and night” (*Apoc.* 7, 14-5). Neither has old age any place there, nor the afflictions of old age, whilst everyone reaches “perfect manhood, that maturity which is proportioned to the completed growth of Christ” (*Ephesians* 4, 13).

‘But far greater than all these things, indeed, it is to enter into fellowship with the companies of the angels and archangels. To enjoy fully the companionship of the Thrones, too, and of the Dominations, the Principalities and Powers, and of all the celestial, supernatural Virtues. To gaze upon the squadrons of the saints, sparkling more brilliantly than the stars. To contemplate the patriarchs, glittering with faith; the prophets, joyful in hope; the apostles, judging the world in the twelve tribes of Israel; the martyrs, resplendent with the purple garlands of victory; the glistening-white choirs of virgins, too, wearing their wreaths of flowers.

‘But the King who dwells in their midst, no words are able to describe. His dignity, his beauty, his perfection, his glory, his nobleness, his majesty, these escape all expression in speech, they cannot be grasped by the human mind. For greater far it is than all the glory of the saints to attain to his presence which surpasses all our estimation, and to be made radiant with the splendour of his majesty. It would be worth while suffering torments daily—it would be worth while enduring even hell itself for a little while—if by these means we might see Christ coming in glory, and be given a place in the company of the saints. Should we not consider it well worth while to

have borne all our sorrows patiently, if it gave us a share in such goodness and such glory?’

Think, beloved brethren, of the glory of the just! Think of the great gladness of the saints, when every face will shine as the sun, when our Lord will begin to muster his people in separate ranks in his Father’s kingdom, and bestow the rewards promised for the merits and works of each individually! When he will give heavenly things for earthly ones, eternal things for temporal ones, great things in place of little ones! When he will introduce the saints to the vision of his Father’s glory, and enthrone them with himself above the heavens (cf. *Ephesians* 2, 6), to the end that God may be all in all! When he will give to those who love him the eternity he promised them, and the immortality which he purchased for them with his life-giving blood! When, finally, he will lead them home to paradise and open the kingdom of heaven, faithful and true to his promise!

Let these things be firmly engrafted in our senses, be understood by the fullness of our faith, be loved with all our heart, and be obtained by the noble quality of unceasing works. The prize is well within the fighter’s power, because ‘the kingdom of heaven opens to force’ (*Matt.* 11, 12). And the price to be paid for this prize, O man, which is the kingdom of heaven, is none other than for yourself. It is worth what you are worth. Give yourself, and then it belongs to you. But why let the price worry you? Christ gave himself up in order to win you as a kingdom for God, his Father. Give yourselves, then, after Christ’s example, so that you form God’s kingdom; ‘you must not, then, allow sin to tyrannize over your perishable bodies’ (*Rom.* 6, 12), but become instead the subjects of your higher nature and save your lives.

May we be attracted, therefore, to strive after the prize stored up for those who perform works worthy of salvation. Let us compete for it cheerfully and readily. Let us all run in this contest of virtue, of which God and Christ are the spectators. We have already begun to rise superior to this life and to this world; let us not hinder our progress by any longing for what this life has to give. If the Last Day shall find us running swiftly and unimpeded in the race of salvation, our Lord will not fail to reward our merits. For he who will give a crown of purple hue for their sufferings to those who are victorious in persecution, will also give a dazzling white diadem in return for the merits of their virtues to those who triumph in peace. Neither Abraham nor Isaac, nor Jacob, for example, were put to death; and yet, distinguished by the merits of their faith and virtue, they were entitled to the first place among the patriarchs. And everyone without exception, who is found to be faithful, just and praiseworthy, is assigned a place in their festal assembly.



We should remember that it is God's will that must be fulfilled, not our own; for the man who does God's will lives on for ever, just as God continues for ever. And so, dearly beloved, let us be ready to do what God wills in everything, with a sound judgment, an immovable faith, solid virtue and perfect charity. Thus we shall resolutely be keeping our Lord's commands: innocence in simplicity, harmony in charity, modesty in humility, carefulness in all our undertakings, watchful attention in helping those in distress, tender-heartedness in assisting the poverty-stricken, steadfastness in defending the truth, prudence in disciplinary strictness—so that nothing shall be wanting in us to serve as an example of good deeds. For these are the footprints left to us by each of the saints as they returned home to their fatherland, so that by keeping to their pathways we may also come to their joys.

Let us consider that paradise is our homeland as well as theirs, and already we shall begin to regard the patriarchs as our ancestors. Why, then, do we not hasten and run to see our fatherland and greet our ancestors? A great multitude of loved ones is eagerly looking out for us there; a vast and mighty crowd of parents, brethren and children are longing for us (of their own salvation they are now assured, but they are anxious still for us). How great will be their joy and ours, when we come to see them and receive their embrace—the pleasure those who are waiting for us in heaven will take in our company, who share with them the service of God—the supreme and never-ending bliss! The glorious choir of the apostles is rejoicing there, so too is the distinguished band of joyful prophets, the numberless host of martyrs crowned for their victories in battle, and the shining train of virgins; there also there is praise for the fortitude of those who confessed their Faith. And that same reward is waiting too for those who, in obedience to our Lord's commandments, treated the inheritance of earth as nothing in comparison with the treasures of heaven.

If we long for the pleasure of their company, let us hasten on our way with insatiable eagerness to be with them as soon as possible and for a speedy union with Christ. May we have him for our guide on our journey, who is the source of salvation, the prince of light, the liberal giver of unrestrained joyfulness, who lives and reigns with God the almighty Father, and the Holy Spirit.

## THE PURGATIVE WAY—CONCLUSION

(*Ancren Riwe*, Parts V-VIII)

BY

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

**P**URIFICATION continues to be an unpleasant part of life up to the very last breath, however advanced in holiness a man may be. The first stage in the way of perfection is called 'purgative' or purifying only because that ascetic activity is the predominant one at the beginning. A man has to struggle to abandon vice when he turns to God and sincerely tries to follow him. And so he purifies himself and opens his heart to the purifying action of God in the ways already suggested in previous articles. God himself also cultivates the soul as the farmer first cultivates the soil with plough and harrow. But at the point we have reached we come to the first outstanding transformation; the Christian soul is about to be converted once more and to enter upon a new form of life, fuller and more fruitful. He begins to enter another kind of asceticism, a dark night of the senses in which the spirit becomes far freer than before.

The *Ancren Riwe* which we have been following as the best English work on the Purgative Way draws to its conclusion on this note. But first it perfects its teaching on the abandonment of vice by a lengthy and detailed disquisition on the sacrament of penance and on the personal practice of penance. The chapter on confession, the 'most necessary' of all the remedies for sin and temptation, is almost like a section from a manual of moral theology, dealing with six properties of the sacrament and twelve qualities of the penitent in a very practical manner. But the reader must study these for himself; it is more important here to follow the clever transition of the sixth and seventh parts in which the author gradually unfolds the fuller life of love. As he says:

After confession it is proper to speak of penance, that is, amends-deed, and thus we have a way out of the fifth part into the sixth part. (p. 262.)

And in the latter the theme of the war upon vice and temptation is modulated to one of suffering for our Lord's sake, so that at the end of this sixth part he can say:

I think we are now come to the seventh part, which is all of love which maketh a pure heart. (p. 290.)

The final stages of the first 'way' remain penitential but the



general character changes. It is the first appearance of a 'dark night' in any real sense of the word. Before this stage in spite of difficulties and temptations there are usually considerable periods of happiness when the sense of God's presence is easily felt, when meditation brings with it a happy feeling of following Christ or of recognising his Mother; the mysteries of the rosary bring with them at least occasional sweetnesss which convince the soul that she is on the right way. In all that sensible devotion however there is bound to be a considerable amount of self-seeking. And the contrast with the bitterness of temptation or the hardship of penance is very sharp, like going from a dry warm room out into a cold and soaking storm of rain. Penance and prayer in this manner are easily divorced. Penance is one thing, prayer another. Penance is merely unpleasant though necessary, prayer is attractive because of the warmth of devotion. This fact may account for the ease with which people respond to the call to prayer, but neglect the penitential side of that call.

The dark night of the senses begins to heal this breach. There is to be no penance without prayer and no prayer without penance. For all the sweetness in prayer disappears; there is no delight in devotion, kneeling down in the presence of God is indeed a bitter hardship because God seems to be remote, the presence has become for the senses an absence. A man will feel as though he is talking day after day to a blank wall. This is penance indeed. One could put up with the tossing and tempestuousness of temptation when one could go back to God and receive encouragement if not congratulation. But now the successful dealing with a personal weakness or a temptation is answered by a stony silence from the one who used to make his pleasure at such things felt. This new bitterness is sometimes mistaken for acedý and a man will be disturbed in thinking that all spiritual things are now distasteful to him because they are bitter.

But he should not despond for it is not all penance now. In the dark night of the senses this penitential life takes on the new aspect of being itself joyful, not an alternative to joy. Obviously this joy is not a thing of the senses, because the senses could not at once be full of the bitterness of mortification and the joy of satisfaction. The joy is a new thing generated in the dark night, a joy which does not need the light of sensible pleasure but only a new and far more spiritual attachment to God.

There are many different degrees in the way a man may suffer and do penance. Of these the author of the *Rivle* selects three.

The elect of God on earth are of three kinds: one kind may be compared to good pilgrims, another to the dead, the third to men suspended voluntarily upon the cross of Jesus Christ. (pp. 263-4.)

These are Good, Better, and Best. The good give up pleasure and suffer in order to keep straight towards heaven, practising the virtues, overcoming vices, leading the hard life of the pilgrim in order to get to heaven. The Better are they who are dead to the world and hid with Christ in God. They have ceased to be conscious of the allurements of the world.

Worldly speech, worldly sight and every worldly thing findeth me dead; but whatsoever relates to Christ that I see, and hear, and do as one who lives. (p. 266.)

Already identification with Christ is beginning. This death to the world is painful enough; but the end of the pilgrimage is no longer seen as years ahead; the end is present in the presence of Christ. It is possible now to find some consolation in these pains by referring them immediately to our Lord who himself died to the world in such agony. There is not yet joy in suffering but only joy in spite of suffering; in other words this joy still remains proper to the normal state of the beginner dependent as he is on consolation; it does not yet spring from the fuller freedom of the dark night.

The best are they who glory in the cross of Christ. The author begins this chapter of the *Riwe* by saying that the anchoress must be of this nature—all joy must be in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

He that is on the cross, and hath delight in it, turneth reproach to honour, and sorrow into joy . . . such are they who are never glad-hearted except when they are suffering some grief or some reproach with Jesus on his cross (p. 127).

Such a statement might sound like a wretched callousness or even a strange type of masochistic perversion, but it is in fact the fully released kind of penance which springs from love: 'for this is the greatest happiness on earth when anyone can, *for the love of God*, bear reproach and pain'.

In all the different ladders, scales and degrees, in St Bernard's degrees of humility, in the steps of the ladder of Ruysbroek, in the Scale of Perfection and the Ascent of Mount Carmel, there always occurs the stage at which a strange delight in suffering appears. It is a delight not so much in self-inflicted punishment as in the more spiritual and more intense sufferings which come from outside. In particular the suffering caused by misunderstanding, unjust reproach, ignominy unmerited. In the unpurified soul these afflictions coming from the attitude or the tongues of others stir up a strong if not violent reaction of anger, self-righteous anger which insists upon justice being done for self. It is a natural instinct of self-preservation and self-assertion. At first it causes constant disturbance and anguish to deal with this, and as a general rule God does not allow it until his son or daughter has become more at home in the spiritual



atmosphere of prayer and the supernatural virtues. But it will come eventually and it is particularly connected with the night of the senses because at first the sensible satisfaction of just wrath and self-assertion have to be removed. So gradually the pain and contempt inflicted by others come to be accepted not merely with interior repression which cannot be good for any soul if long endured, but in the expanding influence of joy. Joy in misunderstanding, joy in ignominy, joy in contempt, this is the chief character of the dark night of the senses, because it is a new joy not bound to the senses at all.

Many might be willing to suffer in some measure bodily hardships, and to be meanly accounted of, but not to endure ignominy. He is only in part upon the Cross who is not ready to endure them both. Contempt and ill-usage; these two things, ignominy and pain, as St Bernard saith, are the two arms of the ladder which reach up to heaven, and between those arms are fixed the staves or steps of all the virtues by which men climb to the blessedness of heaven (p. 268).

The author of the *Riule* is quite certain that anyone who takes the spiritual life seriously will certainly have to go through ignominy and contempt from others, and often unjustly.

The joy that springs up from such a stony ground is certainly not caused by the arid rocks of injustice, which of itself can only bring bitterness. The joy comes interiorly from the knowledge that the ignominy and injustice are permitted by God so that the soul can be finally purified from sensible attachments. But such denudation does not come of itself alone. The dark night is not a mere pagan state of non-attachment of which the delight is a self-delight in freedom and untrammelledness. It is a Christian detachment and the joy does spring literally from the Cross of Christ. This ignominy, first borne for the sake of our Lord, copying him in his attitude to the unjust accusations which brought him to an unjust death, grows into the very ignominy of Christ himself. The Christian becoming more identified, his sufferings become Christ's sufferings. The strange identification of the soul with Christ which occurs in the mystical body brings a new kind of joy in suffering as the soul expands under its influence, because the suffering of Christ brings a new meaning altogether to suffering. Pain apart from him remains meaningless, a mere curse somehow inherent in the present state of our being, a thing to be escaped, a terrifying privation of human happiness which can bring no delight with it. But the Christian looking at the crucifix first of all sees that pain and ignominy have some meaning and he tries to follow our Lord in his way of acceptance—that is the character of the major part of the purgative way. Then he grows

more united to the cross as the union of the mystical body becomes more real in him personally.

Following St Paul and quoting the Gloss, the *Riwle* states it clearly:

'God shed his blood for all men, but it is efficacious to them only who abstain from carnal pleasure and mortify themselves'. And is that any wonder? Is not God our head, and all we his members, and is not every member pained when the head is in pain? His member, then, he is not who hath no ache under such a painfully aching head (p. 272).

The secret of this interior delight which can co-exist with external bitterness is love. Later we shall see how Mother Julian says of our Lady that the greatest sorrow that a lover can have is to see the beloved suffering. It is the love of our Lord in his sufferings which unites the soul to him, gathers it more securely in his embrace, hides it in his open wounds upon the cross. It is something to follow Christ and to try to accept hardships and mortifications in the way he accepted his own; but it is far greater to become engrossed in the love of Christ crucified so that his own very pains cause us anguish as they did to our Lady at the foot of the cross. This love of Christ's sufferings is the hallmark of the saints. All the saints have been engrossed primarily in that meditation under one of its aspects. And it can easily be seen how the Mass, which is the reality of the crucifixion actually presented to us, should play a central part in this stage of spiritual development. We should recall the early part of the *Riwle* where the vocal prayers centred round the holy cross and the blessed sacrament are described in detail; those daily actions are to be understood as the essential background to the whole treatise, especially this last section. The sacrifice of Calvary is represented in such a way that we can all assist at the offering standing at the foot of the cross with our Lady and St John. If this is true, as we believe it to be, then our love for our Lord hanging in anguish on the cross, should grow with every celebration of the Eucharist. Particularly the Christian who is entering the dark night of the senses should keep his eyes fixed on the reality of the Mass. Christ the victim becomes increasingly the reality of daily life; the desire to become a co-victim with Christ grows powerful and dominates this stage. Consequently one who feels that such a stage has been reached should be insistent upon regular assistance at Mass.

The author of the *Riwle* here introduces a charming analogy with the three Marys who came to anoint Jesus's body. Mary means 'bitter' and there are three degrees of bitterness in the way of approach to our Lord. These are the remorse and sorrow for sin, and

the wrestling with temptation; but finally the most refined and perfect bitterness is the longing for heaven,

when one is of such exalted piety that his heart is at rest with regard to the war against vice and he is as it were in the gates of heaven, and all worldly things seem bitter to him. This bitterness is to be understood by Mary Salome, the third Mary. For Salome signifieth peace, and they who have peace and the repose of a pure conscience, have in their heart bitterness of this life, which detains them from blessedness which they long for, and from God whom they love (p. 283).

If we understand this of the cessation of the war against vice in terms of the external type of temptation and sin of which he has been so often speaking, this final bitterness gives a fair notion of the dark night of the senses. Consolation is withdrawn from the senses, but inwardly a new type of peace and freedom of spirit is born. The approach to our Lord, which is signified by the going with the Marys to anoint Jesus, gives this tranquil sorrow, a sorrow at the sight of Christ's wounds and a sorrow from the desire to be wholly his, but a sorrow which does not disturb or distract the mind and will. Christ himself comes close and envelops the soul with his own contemplative and redemptive sorrow which is almost wholly derived from love.

Those sufferings are 'coming to anoint' our Lord which we endure for his sake. He stretcheth himself towards us as a thing that is anointed, and maketh himself tender and soft to handle (p. 285). Our Lord the lover 'cometh leaping *on* the mountains, leaping *over* the hills'. The mountains are the highest life of love and contemplation upon which he leaves the imprint of his feet, impressing on them the footmarks of the pain he suffered on this earth. So the happiness of the true lover lies in the fact that he bears in his body 'the likeness of Jesus Christ's death'. The bitterness is there most painful and yet it is joyous. 'Nothing is ever so hard that love doth not make tender and soft and sweet' (pp. 287-9).

St Thomas in his treatise on Charity devotes a long 'question' to 'The Subject of Love', that is to say the faculty wherein it resides and how it does reside there. This demands a detailed and subtle discussion on how charity increases and diminishes; and in that discussion are to be found all the principles of the 'way of perfection', of the three degrees of the spiritual life, for this is nothing else than the increase of charity. Each step up the ladder means a new and fuller manifestation of the love of God. 'Charity of "the way" can be increased', St Thomas begins this part of the question, 'for we are said to be "way-farers" in the sense that we are making for God who is the final end of our beatitude or happiness. We advance along



this "way", however, to the extent in which we draw close to God; and we approach him not by striding with bodily limbs but by the affectionate movements of the heart. This closeness to God; then, is brought about by charity, since through charity the soul cleaves to God' (11-11, 24, 4). These struggles therefore of the purgative way should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the essential work of perfection is the approach to union through love. Perhaps there are times when the overcoming of vice and resisting temptation obscure this fundamental principle, but certainly at the end of this stage it becomes clearer and clearer that purification is finally achieved by the purifying fire of charity. It is love that purifies the heart and uses all the other virtues as instruments in this cleansing process. The author of the *Rivle*, who never loses sight for a moment of the fact that the final rule is that which regulates the heart, the rule of love, begins the seventh part 'Of Love' in this way:

St Paul witnesseth that all outward hardships, and all pains of the flesh, and all bodily labours, are as nothing when compared with love which purifieth and brighteneth the heart (p. 291). This pure heart begins to reveal itself in the period of darkness when the soul is approaching the illuminative way. The distressing complexity of motives which have been one of the disturbing stumbling blocks of the first stages is now becoming simplified, and the Christian begins to realize that his motive has become more single as the intensity of the desire to die and be dissolved in Christ increases into the bitterness of the dark night. By this time it should have become clear that one's reason for being kind to a friend or saying an extra rosary or spending an extra ten minutes at prayer is not principally self-advertisement, spiritual ambition, or concern about what others should think. These other-than-holy motives may still remain to some extent in the intention, but all their cruder manifestations will have disappeared with the growth of their opposing virtues. In this way the purity of intention grows clearer and the purifying love makes everything more distinct; there are fewer hesitations and complexities of conscience. This is the purity of motive for which the beginner is so often too impatient, but which appears as the desire increases for God in himself and alone. This desire is indeed the true manifestation of the pure love of God, as it is also the source of peace.

Now as the soul takes her departure from the love of worldly things and becomes purified and single of purpose, she begins to experience the perfecting of the law of charity. At first the spiritual life is one of rule and obedience to rule. Obedience is in many ways the principal virtue and can become, as already suggested, in some sense the form of the other moral virtues. The good Christian begins to

lead the life of Christ on earth because it is God's will. I begin to tell the truth not so much because it is an intrinsic and natural good of mind and speech that I should do so but because God wishes me to do so. I seek justice for others because I know God wants it so; I remain patient under hardship and trial because it is his will. All things are done under obedience to counteract the disobedience of original sin. Should I be doing these things for the intrinsic good in them I might easily be doing them largely out of self-will and self-expression—the good pagan already mentioned frequently in previous articles. But progress has gradually eliminated this danger of self-will and self-perfection. Obedience is a virtue which crushes self-will, grinds it to powder and makes it 'tender, soft, and sweet' so that it can be moulded into any shape by God himself. The will thus crushed by obedience takes on the form of God's will; the desires of God become the desires of the obedient will. In this identification of the human will with the divine is to be found the ground work of the union of love. For the union of love is the union of wills in the things which one will shares with the other. 'If you love me keep my commandments'—this is the first aspect of love and obedience. The hardships of the victim obedient unto death are the effective sign of the perfecting of the union of the soul with God. If one wishes to love God he follows the rule of obedience until his will has become identical with God's will and he wakes up to discover that he is established in the love of God. So that the answer to 'If you love me keep my commandments', is the correlative phrase of St Augustine's 'Love and do whatever you wish' (p. 292); because by now what you wish has become what God wishes, and you cannot love him and be ready to offend him.

Thus the limited universality of obedience, which remains on the lower level of the moral virtues, gives place to the true universality of charity.

Pureness of heart is the love of God only. In this is the whole strength of all religious professions, and the end of all religious orders. 'Love fulfilleth the law', saith St Paul. 'All God's commands', as St Gregory saith, 'rooted in love' (p. 293).

This part is indeed the climax of the whole *Rule* because the author has never lost sight of the perfection of all laws and regulations which can only be the love of God and without which his rule would lead to legalism and the life of the Pharisee. And necessarily this perfection is the work of God's love of man. It is God's love for us that overcomes the limitations of law and brings the freedom of spirit of a soul in love with God. This period in the spiritual life as the external light wanes and the night of the senses descends is marked by an increase of the passivity of the soul which receives God's infinite

love shining upon it with a new interior light and the soul like the moon reflects this obscure light coming from behind the universe (cf. pp. 303-4).

The author of the *Riwle* uses the allegory of the Lord wooing his Lady and with it he pens what is certainly the most moving passage in the whole book. Christ wooed his Lady first by sending ambassadors and letters ahead of him to his Lady. In the Old Testament these letters were sealed and could not be understood by her, but at last he came himself bringing opened letters, the Gospels, 'and wrote with his own blood salvation to his beloved as a love greeting to woo her with and to obtain her love' (p. 294). The Lady is besieged by her foes in an earthen castle; she is weak and poor; but this King stops at nothing to free her and so to win her heart and wed her. This allegory in the age of chivalry was familiar, but here it is so simply and strikingly told that it gathers the whole doctrine of the *Riwle* into those few paragraphs. 'This love is the rule which regulates the heart. . . . This rule is the lady or mistress. All the others serve her, and for her sake alone they ought to be loved' (p. 311).

This might seem to point to an even higher stage in the life of the spirit, when God draws the soul into such close union that he first offers his hand in betrothal and then finally transforms the soul by the union of spiritual wedlock. But in fact this wonderful state, although far distant, can already be glimpsed in the growing domination of love at the end of the purgative way, and we have in fact reached no further than this transition stage when the Christian first looks for the new illumination brought by love. This period is still under the purifying sign of the cross.

My dear sisters, you have now heard how, and for what reason, God is greatly to be loved. To kindle this love in you rightly, gather wood for that purpose, with the poor woman of Sarepta, the town the name whereof signifieth kindling. 'Lord', saith she to Elijah the holy prophet, 'behold I am gathering two sticks.' These two sticks betoken that one stick which stood upright, and that other also of the precious cross which went athwart it. With these two sticks ye ought to kindle the fire of love within your hearts. Look often upon them. Think whether ye ought not joyfully to love the King of Glory, who so stretcheth out his arm towards you, and bows down his head as if to offer you a kiss (pp. 304-5).



## THE DAY OF THE LORD

BY

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

*Hæc est dies quam fecit Dominus: exsulemus et lætemur in ea!*

SUNDAY, the day of joy, commemorates the cause of our joy and looks forward to its consummation in eternity. There can be no Christian life without Sunday, no Sunday without the Mass. Here is the setting of the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and its acceptance is the condition of any Christian recovery. Too often Sunday is confused with its secondary aspects: obligations, abstention from servile work, the merely natural rest in the cycle of time demanded by man's nature. But the first day of the week is the day of resurrection, far older as a feast than Easter. Its holiness enshrines the central mystery of Faith, and the Sabbath that marks the creative rest of God is transfigured now into the day of the new creation of grace.

At Lyons, in September, a national Congress of the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* assembled to honour the Lord's Day. In France there is an ever-quickening current of Catholic opinion which sees that one necessary thing precedes all Catholic 'action': and that thing is the renewal of the life of the Christian community as such, in the thousands of parishes that together make up the Church. As a spectacle, the presence of a score of bishops and thousands of priests and hundreds of lay folk, united in their intention to work and pray for such a renewal, was something to marvel at. There is no room here to attempt a summary of the proceedings of the Congress, with its addresses by such men as Professor Romano Guardini, Fathers Congar, Féret, Daniélou, Canon Cardijn, the Abbés Michonneau and Chevallier, and many more. The papers are soon to be published, and one hopes that many English Catholics may want to read them. Here one may try to recall how the Congress made living and concrete the Dominical reality: the day of the Lord that is, therefore, the day of joy and brotherhood, the day of the Christian family as redeemed.

The Liturgy is not an optional setting for Christian worship: it is that worship, and individual sanctification must find in the collective praise of the Mystical Body the release it needs to save it from a sterile introspection. The basilica at Fourvière, standing fortress-like above the city of Lyons, was the setting for the liturgical *fact* which the addresses and discussions sought to illuminate. Perhaps the most

striking feature of all was the daily community mass, sung by all with a lightness of heart that powerfully expressed the unity of the people of God. Hundreds of priests joined with the laity in Holy Communion, singing with them the gradual psalms as they made their way processionally to the altar. Here indeed one sensed the force of Père Congar's appeal for a return to the totality of Catholic life: not a hierarchy, merely, but a family. And at the Pontifical Mass of the Lyons rite in the Cathedral, the splendours of that most prodigal of liturgies were enriched by the communion of the people, again led by many priests.

But Congresses are rare affairs, and their effect must be looked for in the parish churches, deprived of the help of the thousands who are met together because they are convinced of a need that is still unknown to the great majority. In a suburb of Lyons, at Notre Dame-Saint Alban, one was able to see the application of the vital idea of the Lord's Day as the setting in time of the Christian family. Here, in a simple church, Mass is said facing the people. All take part, offering their hosts for communion, mentioning their needs at the *Memento* of the Canon, singing as they go to Communion, and meeting afterwards for breakfast. It is a living community: not eclectic or self-consciously 'liturgical', but ordinary and lovable—the baker, the tram-driver, the medical student, the nurse, and many mothers with their children. All this is the result of years of work by a devoted priest, who has created something which, far more than any Congress, expresses what it means to be a member of the Church.

The *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* is not an academic body. True, it provides the help of experts who, in every sphere of scholarship, have provided the material the pastor needs. Its primary concern is pastoral: there is no ready English word for the noun, but it must be explained that 'pastorale' is the essential, and 'liturgique' is its specification. And Sunday is not only a matter of ecclesiastical obligation. Indeed, the notions of 'compulsory' mass and abstention from servile work are developments intended to fortify the *mysterium* which Sunday, the weekly celebration of the resurrection, proclaims and makes available to the Christian family. Sunday is a day of joy, of release from the servitude of material things. We were given at Lyons many indications of what a Christian Sunday might include: a *kermesse* in the open air, with dancing and songs and the delightful *Guignol lyonnaise*; a performance of Claudel's *Annonce faite à Marie*; cinema shows, designed to help the formation of film-clubs through which the passivity of audiences may be stirred into intelligent criticism; and, always, the joy of meeting and talking, extending the theme of the liturgical gathering in the morning to the rest of a day which wholly belongs to God.

It is idle to suppose that the restoration of its birthright to the ordinary parish can end with the *Ite missa est* of the Mass. Certainly the immediate task is a liturgical one *tout court*: to encourage that active, and therefore responsible, share in the Church's worship which visibly and vocally proclaims the presence of the people of God. But springing from that is the life of the parish as a community, one that is not merely brought together haphazardly—and dumbly—once a week, but which finds in all its activities the extension of that central act of worship. One of the greatest needs of contemporary Catholicism is what one can only call, with the French, a *mystique du dimanche* which will take into account all the circumstances, sociological as well as spiritual, of Christian life today.

The Lyons Congress ended with a pilgrimage to Ars, and it is hard to give an adequate idea of the joy of that gathering in the remote little village, which for all time will be famous for the heroic work of its curé, who so deeply realised the meaning of the Lord's Day. Ars today has all the marks of a place of pilgrimage: the ambitious basilica attached so bizarrely to the simple church made holy by St John Vianney, the rows of shops, the guides, the cafés. But if you climb to the hill from which the curé first saw the scene of his life's work, and where today a delightful statue commemorates his meeting with the shepherd lad who showed him the way, Ars seems a symbol of the Christian community, sheltering under the church, bridging the gap between the house of God and the houses of the men and women who are called to be his friends.

At Ars, mass was said by an anonymous 'curé de France', and Cardinal Gerlier did well to remind us that a liturgical congress could end in no better place than on the battlefield which St John Vianney made glorious: the parish church, where the common people meet to praise God and to implore his aid. The lesson perhaps is that a Christian renewal, like so much else, begins at home—in the familiar setting, with the providentially 'given' circumstances we find. And each Sunday as it comes is, for priest and people alike, a fresh opportunity to rediscover the springs of our life in Christ. Once the fulness of the day of the Lord is known, all its holiness and joy and light and life, there need be no fear for the future. Seek the source, and all the streams of living water that come from it will pour forth into the lives of a people that is redeemed and free.

[NOTE. The publications of the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* may be obtained from BLACKFRIARS PUBLICATIONS, its English agents.]



## THE LIFE OF ST KATHERINE

*Adapted from The Golden Legend of Blessed James of Voragine, O.P.*

BY

ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.

[The original account of St Katherine of Alexandria has disappeared under a mass of medieval additions. As B. James's version will serve to show, the additions are not only beautiful but have a theological importance and a historical value as documents illustrating the history of medieval spirituality. Those who are not concerned about historical values will find the legend worth reading for the doctrine it contains, and there is no reason to doubt the existence of the saint or the main outlines of her character.]



HERE was once a heathen king and queen who ruled well, although they worshipped idols. They had one daughter, Katherine, so beautiful that the people never ceased to wonder, and more clever than any child of her age. So learned and wise was she that her father set aside a tower in his palace where she might gather books around her and study as she liked. He sent for the seven wisest men in the land to teach her, but before long she was the teacher and they her pupils. When the princess was fourteen years old her father died, and left her to be queen of that land. Soon the Parliament of the country met, and as the young queen sat crowned, with her mother beside her, a lord rose up and kneeling at her feet said:

'Most high and mighty princess, I am commanded by the queen your mother, and by the lords and commons of this land, to beg your highness that some noble knight may be found to marry you; one who will rule and defend your kingdom as your father did until now'.

The young queen Katherine was troubled by his speech, for she had vowed to remain a virgin all her days, and would rather die than break her vow. But she answered quietly:

'My good lord, I understand your request, and thank my mother, the lords and all my subjects for the care they have for my happiness and the good of my kingdom. But considering the wisdom of my mother and my lords, and the loyalty of the commons of this land, I trust we shall be in no danger. We have no need of a stranger to rule us and our kingdom, but with your good help we hope to govern and keep this kingdom in justice and peace as in the time of my father. I pray you then to leave this question'.

Hearing this her mother and all the Parliament were startled, and at a loss for words, seeing that she was determined not to marry. An old duke, her uncle, rose at last. He said that her answer brought sorrow to them all and would grieve them still more if she would not think again about the question. Because of her four great gifts, which God had given her beyond all other creatures, she ought certainly to marry and to have children who would be a comfort and joy to all the kingdom.

‘What are these great gifts?’ the queen asked.

‘Madam’, said the duke, ‘you come of the most noble blood in the world. You are a great heiress, the greatest among women. In wisdom and learning there is no one to equal you, nor is anyone like you in bodily beauty. All these things must surely incline you to agree to our request.’

Queen Katherine looked at him sadly. ‘Well, uncle, since God and nature have been so good to me I am more bound to please and to love God, thanking him humbly for his gifts. But as you are so anxious for me to marry, I will describe the kind of man whom I will take for lord and husband. If you can find such a man I will marry him with all my heart. He that shall be lord of my heart must have these four gifts which you have described, and beyond all measure; so much so that all creatures shall have need of him, and he have need of none. He that shall be my lord must be so noble of blood that all men shall worship him. He must be so great a lord that I can never say that I made him king. He must be rich beyond all men; so beautiful that the angels have joy in seeing him, so pure that his mother is a virgin, and so meek and kind that he can forgive any offence given him. That is the man I want for husband, and if you can find him I will be his wife with all my heart, if he will have me. If you cannot find such a man, I will never marry. This is my final answer.’

There was sorrow and dismay among the lords when they heard this, and saw that her mind was settled. Her mother spoke to her with an angry voice, saying:

‘Is this your great wisdom which is so much talked of? What woman ever dreamed of such a husband? The husband you imagine never was and never will be. So, daughter, stop this foolishness and do as your ancestors did before you’.

The young queen Katherine sighed heavily. ‘Mother, my reason tells me that there must be someone better than I can ever describe or imagine, and unless he finds me by his grace, I shall never be happy. For I think there is a way which we have all lost. We wander in darkness, and until the light of grace comes we cannot see the true way. But when grace comes, it shall clear away the dark clouds

of our ignorance, and show me clearly him whom my heart loveth. Even if he does not wish me to find him, yet reason tells me to keep whole what I can. Do not trouble me more, for I will keep all the love of my heart for him whom I have described.'

With these words she rose and went to her palace, leaving her mother and the lords of parliament in great distress. All her heart was on fire with love of the husband she had thought of. She wondered continually how she could find him, for he had kindled in her a burning love which nothing was ever to quench; but she could not think how she might find him, not knowing how close he was to her heart.

At this same time there was, in the desert of Egypt, a hermit called Adrian who had served our Lord there for thirty years. One day as he walked up and down in front of his cell, thinking about the things of God, there appeared a lady of so great beauty and majesty that he fell down before her in astonishment. The lady called to him:

'Brother Adrian, fear nothing; I am here to do you good'. She raised him gently, and added:

'Adrian, you must go to the city of Alexandria with a message from me to Queen Katherine. Tell her that the lady whose son she has chosen for her husband, sends her greeting, and says that her son desires her beauty. I command her to come at once with you to this place, where she shall be new-clothed; then she shall see him and have him for her husband everlastingly'.

'Ah! blessed lady', said Adrian, trembling, how shall I take your message? I do not know the city, nor the way to it. And if I did, who am I to take a message to the queen? Her servants would not let me in, and if I got in, she would think I was a lying rogue and throw me into prison.'

'Do not be afraid, Adrian', said the blessed lady. 'What my son has begun in her must be finished, for she is a chosen vessel of special grace. You will have no difficulty, for the angel of the lord will lead you there and bring you back safely'.

Adrian obeyed, and everything happened as the lady had promised. He walked through the palace unhindered until he came to Queen Katherine's private study. As soon as Katherine heard his message she rose and followed the old man through the palace and city, forgetting all her royal state, into the desert. As they walked she asked many deep questions, and he taught her the Christian faith. The old man became worried as they went on, for he had lost his way completely. He thought to himself:

'Alas! I fear I am deceived. This must be an illusion. Now blessed lady Mary, help me and save this maiden who left all she had for love of you'.



Katherine noticed his distress and asked him what was wrong.

'I am worried for your sake', he said, 'for I cannot find my cell.'

'Do not be afraid', Katherine told him. 'The good lady who sent you to me will not leave us to die in the wilderness. What is that wonderful monastery which I see in the distance?'

Adrian rubbed his eyes, and saw the most glorious monastery he had ever seen.

'Blessed be God', he cried, 'who has given you such perfect faith; for there is the place where you shall receive greater joy than ever any woman had, except our blessed Lady, Christ's own Mother, the queen of all queens.'

They hurried on together, and as they came near the place there met them a glorious company dressed in white, with crowns of lilies on their heads, all of such beauty and brightness that Katherine and the old man could not look at them but fell to the ground in fear and wonder. Then one of the brightest of the company spoke:

'Rise, Katherine, our dear sister'.

He led her in to the next gate, where a still more glorious company waited, clothed in purple, with crowns of red roses on their heads. They encouraged her, saying:

'Fear nothing, dear sister, for no one was ever more welcome to our Lord than you, or more welcome to us all; for you will receive our dress and wear our crown with such honour that all the saints will rejoice in you. Come, for the Lord waits for you'.

Katherine went on swiftly with them, so full of joy that she could not speak. When she came into the church she heard a song of marvellous sweetness, sweeter than any the heart could imagine. There she saw a queen standing in majesty, with a multitude of angels and saints whose beauty and glory no pen can describe. The company of martyrs and virgins with Katherine fell on their faces before the queen, saying:

'Most sovereign lady, queen of heaven, empress of the world, mother of almighty God whom all heaven and earth obey, we present to you our dear sister whose name is written in the Book of Life, beseeching your grace to take her as your daughter, that the work which our blessed Lord has begun in her may be accomplished'.

Our blessed Lady replied: 'Bring my beloved daughter'. Hearing her speak, Katherine was filled with such joy that she lay like one dead. But the saints lifted her up and brought her to our Lady, who said:

'My dear daughter, you are welcome, for you are specially chosen by my Son. Do you remember how you described a husband to your parliament, when you had a great conflict to defend your chastity?'

Katherine, kneeling humbly before her, said: 'O most blessed

Lady, I remember how I chose that Lord whom I did not know, but now by his mercy and your grace my eyes are opened and my ignorance cleared away. Now I see the way of truth, and I humbly beseech you that I may have him whom my heart loves, without whom I cannot live.'

'My dear daughter', our Lady answered, 'it shall be as you wish, but there is one thing which you must receive before you come to the presence of my Son. You must be clothed with the sacrament of baptism. Come, everything is ready.'

Then our blessed Lady called Adrian and said that as he was a priest it was his office to baptize Katherine. So he baptised her and our Lady herself was her godmother. After the baptism our Lady told Katherine that now she had all that was needed by the wife of a heavenly husband. And our Lady led her to the entrance of the choir, where she saw our Saviour Jesus Christ with a host of angels. Our Lady said to her Son:

'All honour, joy and glory be to you, king of bliss, my Lord, my God, and my Son. I have brought to your blessed presence your servant Katherine, who for love of you has refused all earthly things, and has come at my bidding, hoping and trusting to receive what I promised her'.

Our blessed Lord lifted his mother, and said: 'Mother, what pleases you pleases me, your desire is mine, and I desire that she be married to me. Katherine, come here'.

As soon as she heard him say her name so great sweetness filled her soul that she was ravished out of herself, but our Lord gave her new strength above nature, and said to her:

'Come, my bride, and give me your hand'.

There our Lord joined her to himself in spiritual marriage, promising to keep her through all her life in this world, and after this life to bring her to reign eternally in his bliss. In token of this he put a ring on her finger, commanding her to keep it in remembrance of him. 'Fear nothing, my dear bride', he said. 'I will not leave you, but will always comfort and strengthen you.'

Then the new bride answered: 'O blessed Lord, I thank you with all my heart for your great mercies. Make me worthy to be thy servant and to please you whom I love above all things'.

Our Lord then said to Katherine: 'The time has come when I must return to the place from which I came. Whatever you desire I am ready to give you. When I am gone you must stay here with Adrian ten days until you know perfectly my laws and my will. When you go home you will find your mother dead, but do not be afraid for no one has missed you all this time. I have set someone

in your place until you come back, whom all think is you. Farewell, my dear bride'.

Katherine cried out sorrowfully: 'Ah! my Lord God, all the joy of my soul, keep me ever in mind!'

With that our Lord blessed her and vanished from her sight. And she fell down in a trance which lasted a whole hour. When she came to she saw nothing but an old cell, and Adrian weeping bitterly by her side. Monastery, palace, and royal company had all vanished. She wept and mourned until she noticed the ring on her finger, and then she was filled with joy again and kissed it a thousand times. Adrian taught her all she had to know. After the ten days were passed she returned to her palace, where she governed her kingdom in justice and holiness with great charity, converting many people to the Christian faith, and always having Jesus Christ in her mind. She was then eighteen years of age.

The emperor of Rome was the overlord of her kingdom, and one day he came to the city of Alexandria and began to force men to sacrifice to idols. Hearing of this the queen went with some of her servants and met the emperor at the gate of the temple. She spoke bravely to him, telling him that it was not fitting that a man of his dignity and wisdom should worship idols.

'This temple and these idols', she said, 'are as dust in the wind. Look rather at the heavens and the earth, at the sun, moon and stars, all the planets that have been since the world began and shall be as long as it shall please God. See how they move from east to west and never weary. When you know all the wonder of these things, ask then who is mightiest of all, the maker of all; and when you know him who is maker and ruler of all things, to whom nothing is equal, then worship and glorify him, for he is God of gods, and Lord of lords.'

The emperor was greatly put out by what she said, and could not answer her, so at last he said that when he had finished the sacrifice he would give her an answer. He commanded that she should be led to his palace and kept until his return, marvelling greatly at her wisdom and beauty. After the sacrifice he came to the palace, and said to her:

'If what you say is true then the whole world is in error, except you. But you are one frail woman, and should not be believed'.

He began to argue further with her, but finding that he was losing the argument he sent for famous scholars and philosophers to come and dispute with her, promising them rich rewards if they could change her mind. Fifty of the wisest men in the world were brought hastily to Alexandria. They were full of scorn when they found that they had been brought from so many far countries because of one



young girl. When Katherine heard how many of them she had to face she prayed to our Lord for strength, and an angel came and assured her that she would not be overcome. Then she and the fifty masters were brought before the emperor, to whom Katherine said:

‘What trial is this, setting fifty great masters against one girl, promising them great rewards if they win, but promising none to me? God will be with me, and he will be my reward, as he is of all who fight for him’.

They began to argue that it was impossible for God to become man, or to suffer death, but Katherine used the words of their own poets and philosophers to defeat them, until at last they were all silent, and did not know what more to say. They dared say nothing against our Lord, and at last one of them told the emperor that unless he could bring some better defence of the gods they used to worship they would all become Christians. The emperor, mad with rage and vexation, ordered them to be burnt. The holy virgin Katherine strengthened them in the faith. They were afraid to die without having been baptized, but she told them: ‘Do not be afraid, for the shedding of your blood shall be counted as your baptism. Strengthen yourselves with the sign of the cross and you shall be crowned in heaven’.

They did as she told them, and died bravely. The emperor tried again to persuade Katherine to yield to him, but she constantly refused. To break her spirit he ordered her to be stripped naked, whipped with scorpions, and cast into prison to lie in darkness with no food for twelve days. Meanwhile he went away from the city on certain business. The empress, who had grown to love Katherine deeply, went to the prison at night with Porphyry, the captain of the royal guards. Katherine taught them the joy of heaven and converted them and two hundred soldiers. All the time she was in prison a white dove came to her with food, sent by our Lord. And Christ himself appeared to her in prison with a great company of angels and virgins, and said to her: ‘Be constant, for I am with thee’.

On the emperor’s return she was again brought before him. Seeing her so radiant when he expected to find her wasted by hunger, he supposed someone had fed her secretly in prison, and commanded the prison guards to be tortured. He begged her again to change her mind, offering to divorce his wife and make her empress instead.

‘Whom should I prefer’, Katherine answered, ‘the king who is powerful, eternal and glorious? or the one who is sick, mortal and unclean?’

‘Choose’, retorted the emperor, ‘to offer sacrifice and live, or to suffer torments and die’.

‘Waste no more time’, she said, ‘for I desire to offer God my flesh and blood as he offered his for me. He is my God, my father and my

friend, and the only husband I will ever have'.

A clever craftsman then offered to make four wheels of iron, set with sharp blades, and arranged so that the wheels should turn in opposite directions, in such a way that anything between them should be cut into little pieces. It was decided that Katherine should be cut to pieces in these wheels, so that other Christians might be terrified and deny their faith. But Katherine prayed our Lord to break these wheels for the sake of the people who were standing by. And as soon as she was set between the wheels they fell apart. Then the empress began to scold the emperor for his cruelty, and seeing that she too was now a Christian he had her head cut off. And because Porphyry took her body and gave it Christian burial he also was killed. Calling Katherine to him the emperor said: 'You have made the empress a victim of your magic, but still if you repent and do sacrifice I will make you ruler of my palace. If not, you will lose your head'.

'Do what you say', said Katherine. 'I am ready to suffer'.

As she was brought to the place of execution she lifted her eyes to heaven and prayed: 'O Jesus Christ, hope and help of all who believe in thee! Grant that whosoever shall remember my passion at his death or in any other trouble, and ask my help, shall have by thy mercy an answer to his prayer'.

And a voice was heard from heaven: 'Come unto me, my love and my bride. See, the gates of heaven are opened for you. To all who honour your passion I promise the comfort of heaven in their need'.

Then she was beheaded, and angels carried her body to Mount Sinai where it was buried, and where a church and monastery were afterwards built in honour of the holy virgin Saint Katherine.

## REVIEWS

ST TERESA OF JESUS. By P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, O.D.C. (Sands; 7s. 6d.)

A new life of St Teresa by so distinguished an authority as P. Silverio de Santa Teresa must be welcomed by all admirers of the saint.

P. Silverio explains in the foreword that in undertaking this 'short life' his intention has been 'to enable those who have no time for lengthy Teresian biographies to become acquainted in a few hours with the life and doings of a great writer who, as woman and saint, has acquired a universal reputation, seldom equalled in the domain of Christian spirituality'.

The present work is thus, intentionally, elementary, rather an introduction to St Teresa than a critical or prolonged study such as the name of the author might lead one to expect, and this is at first disappointing; but such an introduction is no doubt needed, and is of course far better done by an expert.

The only way to get to know St Teresa fully is to read her own works, and that not once or twice but many times, but many people hesitate to embark on what they think of as too rarified a spirituality, and they may be encouraged to attempt it by acquaintance with her vital and human personality 'at once divinely human and humanly divine'. This important element of personal charm is indeed admirably brought out in this little book.

The text is supported by constant reference to original sources and by many useful footnotes.

The translation seems to suffer in many places from a too literal rendering of the Spanish idiom: phrases which in the original would read, no doubt, quite naturally and simply, produce in English a stilted and over-pietistic style, which is out of keeping with the general tenour.

The illustrations are quite unworthy of the text.

ROSALIND MURRAY

THE POEMS OF ST JOHN OF THE CROSS: Spanish-English text, translated by E. Allison Peers. (Burns Oates; 3s. 6d.)

The publication of the Poems of St John of the Cross in a separate volume fulfils a long-felt want, and the present edition, in which the Spanish text is accompanied by an English translation, page by page, is particularly useful.

The poetry of St John of the Cross has baffled the endeavours of many translators. Perhaps it is intrinsically untranslatable into English; the form and idiom of literary style may be too different; for any attempt to reproduce in English the fluent rhyming and lyrical cadence of the Spanish results inevitably in a jingle, more reminiscent of a popular hymn than of the original poetry; yet to



translate these lyrics into prose is to abandon more than half their magic.

Professor Peers's translations are not successful as poetry nor as substitutes for the originals, but printed as they are here, beside the Spanish, they will be useful in helping readers with a slight knowledge of Spanish to read the poems in the original, and that is no doubt what the translator himself would wish.

ROSALIND MURRAY

The *LIBER VITAE FRATRUM* of Jordan of Saxony, edited by R. Arbosmann, O.S.A., Ph.D. and W. Humpfner, O.S.A., S.Th.D. (Cosmopolitan Science and Art Service, New York; \$7.50.)

This is an historical commentary on the Rule of St Augustine completed towards 1357 by Jordan of Quodlinburg, a German hermit of St Augustine, who lived from 1299 to 1380. Its general presentation, ponderous in volume, matter and method, the critical apparatus, notes drawn out with scientific thoroughness, and learned concordances, might at first frighten away any but enthusiastic students of Augustinian monasticism. But it was meant to be read, as it was obviously written, not at one or two sittings, but in measured periods, and read thus it gradually captivates the simplest reader by the author's infectious love of the Patriarch of Hippo and of the way of life he founded. Though it is Jordan's 'most original and valuable work', and from 1571 officially replaced Hugh of St Victor's 'Commentary' on the Rule of St Augustine, it is, as the editors say in the preface, a rare book. Fr Humpfer is responsible for the historical side with the erudite Introduction and Fr Arbosmann for the critical.

In the Introduction we are told that Jordan was successively Lector at Bologna, Paris, and Erfurt (Saxon-Thuringian Province), Inquisitor, Provincial for many years, and even the Prior General's Delegate. This Introduction also contains a scholarly study of his literary work: one is even led to hope for more on his influence on the Way of the Cross. A point of particular interest is the editor's insistence that the Rule of St Augustine was written for monks, and not for nuns, as was held for so long. Equally noteworthy is the stress on St Augustine's definite intention of founding a religious order in the strict sense. The style of this Introduction sometimes sounds rather quaint: but the indices, sources, and bibliography are very complete. The printing, too, is pleasantly clear, though careful reading still brings out about a dozen misprints over and above those shown in the list of *errata*.

Jordan's actual text is remarkable for its division, which is typically Augustinian in its stress on the unifying power of charity. Thus we have: *Part I*, Community of dwelling: (a) Community life and its kinds, especially among the hermits of St Augustine (ch. i-xiv); (b) the common Augustinian habit (ch. xv); (c) the history of the hermits of St Augustine and their reunion by Alexander IV in 1256. *Part II*, Community of spirit: a commentary on the 'one heart and

one mind' of the Rule: (a) In general (ch. i); (b) One heart: unanimity of will by obedience, charity, humility, and patience (ch. ii-xiii); (c) One mind: uniformity of life in following the same Rule (ch. xiv) which includes prayer (ch. xv-xxi), study (xxii and xxiii), manual work (xxiv-xvii), and chastity (xxviii-xxxii). *Part III*, Community of temporal ownership: poverty: (a) In general (ch. i and ii); (b) In the Augustinian Order (ch. iii-xviii). *Part IV*, Community of distribution, proportional according to the needs of each: (a) In general (ch. i-iv); (b) with regard to food (ch. v-xiii); (c) with regard to clothes (ch. xiv).

All this brings out the unity of the vows and of the religious virtues very well, and shows how the Augustinian life is based on Acts iv, 32 sq. His presentation of poverty (Part III, ch. i and ii) is very personal: he comes near to condemning private property as unnatural and introduced by purely positive law only as the result of sin.

His homely method of illustrating each point by examples from holy Scripture, the lives of the saints, and especially the great men of the Order, helps to give living flesh and blood to what might seem the mere skeleton of a Rule: *exempla trahunt*: v.g. the scriptural commentary on the 'one heart and one mind' (Part II, ch. i).

Though naturally of special interest to those who follow the Rule of St Augustine, it constitutes a study of the religious life in general and provides a store of material for preachers. It is vol. i of 'Cassiciacum', a collection of Studies in St Augustine and the Augustinian Order, and so we look for further volumes in the series, and especially for the promised critical and historical study of the Rule. So far the only translations of the *Liber Vitæ Fratrum* are in Italian and Spanish: perhaps it might be worth while eventually to produce a more popular edition in English, for lay-brothers, tertiaries—and even preachers.

GABRIEL SLATER, A.A.

JESUS ET SON PAYS. By M. H. Lelong, O.P. (Editions du Cerf—Blackfriars Publications; 9s.)

This book is really the chronicle of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The author has written several other travel books, and here again he looks at the land he is writing of as a Catholic, as a priest. Not for nothing on his title page is the holy Name printed in letters exactly four times the size of the type of the other three words of the title. This fact summarises his attitude. He does not go about as an archaeologist or as an exegete, he goes as a Christian pilgrim. Archaeology and exegesis are brought in occasionally as side-lines. English readers will probably understand at once if one says he is a sort of Catholic H. V. Morton. He is simply pursuing the Master through Palestine, but it is the Master he knows so well and prays to all the time. Hence his deep sorrow during the visit to the Upper Room of the Last Supper, now in the hands of the Mohammedans (p. 60), and his joy in the church of the 'Falling asleep of our Lady',

next door, 'where all the sweetness so absent in the Upper Room has taken refuge. . . . At last one can kneel down and pray . . . the tabernacle here has brought back the eucharistic atmosphere so horribly lacking next door. . . . It is through Mary that we have found the true Upper Room of Jerusalem' (p. 69-70). 'The Eucharist has been the soul of our pilgrimage: without the Blessed Sacrament all the archæology and countryside would have little interest, and that closeness to Jesus which becomes so real in the Holy Land would surely vanish into thin air' (p. 57). Again and again we have such thoughts of the priest-pilgrim, as we go with him through Jerusalem, Gethsemani, Jericho and the Jordan valley, Bethlehem, Samaria and Galilee. Wherever he goes he records the emotions of the pilgrim: how the heart leaps at the first sight of Jerusalem, melts at the Holy Sepulchre, is overwhelmed at Gethsemani, oppressed by the arid road to Jericho, bows in simple adoration at Bethlehem, ponders many things at Nazareth, and is consoled in prayer amid the worshipping crowds in the churches. All these things have been noticed by the earliest Christian visitors, by the crusaders, and by pilgrims throughout the centuries. But it is a good thing that they are again recorded in this heartless age. The writer says that it is not merely snapshots that we should bring back from Palestine, but a pilgrim's heart (p. 26): perhaps this is why he has grouped his 41 photographs at the back. They are all very good photographs (though the reproduction is not first-class), and the air view of Jerusalem has a particularly well done and helpful outline-key on the adjacent page.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

ANGLO-SAXON SAINTS AND SCHOLARS. By Eleanor Shipley Duckett. (New York. Macmillan Company; 25s.)

The saints and scholars are Sts Aldhelm, Wilfrid of York, Bede, and Boniface. A long chapter is given to each and a short epilogue summarises their achievement and points out their importance as links between the sixth century and the Middle Ages. Between them they laid great foundations, in England, France and Germany, for the religious and intellectual life of later centuries. Their time was one of half-pagan rulers who would baptise thousands by force or plunder a monastery, according as their desire for treasure or land suggested. It was a period of tension between Roman and Celtic customs in much of Western Europe, one of great missionary effort and monastic growth. These are the themes which Professor Duckett handles with a wide knowledge of the sources, united to a warmth of enthusiasm and imagination which together produce a most interesting book, a vivid picture of an age, not simply portraits of four central figures. Not everyone will agree with the frequent use of the word 'schismatic' in connection with Celtic missions. The term gives too precise and general a character to the various disagreements on points of discipline between certain Western conservatives and the Roman See. At times, too, the author's imagination suggests interpretations of



the feelings and thoughts of her characters more romantic than is perhaps justified, and occasionally there is a touch of bathos or a lapse into the style of the poorer historical novel. This for example, from a passage on St Bede's boyhood, falls below the level of the book: 'Wherever you looked, you saw either the Lord or one of his saints; it made you feel very, very much in their presence, almost afraid'. Well documented, with a good bibliography, at once scholarly and readable, *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Scholars* should be popular.

ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.

THE WAY OF HAPPINESS. By John Gordon Jameson. (Hodge; 3s. 6d.)

Mr Jameson writes refreshingly about the Beatitudes, combining simplicity of appeal with a careful attention to the exact meaning of the Scriptural texts. E.Q.

JEAN CHRYSOSTOME: LETTRES A OLYMPIAS. Introduction et traduction de Anne-Marie Malingrey. Sources Chrétiennes. (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars; 14s. 6d.)

This solid and attractive edition of the letters of St John Chrysostom, written during his last exile to his friend the deaconess and great lady of Constantinople, Olympias, is a worthy addition to the collection of Greek patristic texts appearing in the series *Sources Chrétiennes*. The admirable introduction of nearly 90 pages gives an account of the historical setting and the characters of St John and Olympias and deals with a fine balance and penetration with St John's at first sight rather disconcertingly Stoic rather than Christian principles of direction and with his attitude to suffering. There is also a useful *Notice Bibliographique* giving information about editions, translations, and studies relevant to the letters. The main interest of these letters is personal rather than historical or theological. They do not throw much light on the causes of St John Chrysostom's last exile (about which we have plenty of information from other sources); and what little light they throw on his theology is not altogether favourable. But they do show the very lovable character of the man and also the magnificent but by no means inhuman goodness of Olympias. Whatever may be thought of some of his spiritual direction there is nothing of the repulsive Stoic sage about St John himself. Suffering for him and Olympias was not an abstract 'problem'; their physical, mental and (at least in the case of Olympias) spiritual sufferings at the time of this correspondence were very real, and the worst of all was the pain of separation from their friends, a pain which St John, in a most un-Stoic way, felt very intensely and expresses in a most sincere and moving way, in spite of the rhetorical flourishes which were second nature to him. When he insists, as he repeatedly does, on praising God and rejoicing in and for our sufferings it is in the midst of great suffering, and so with a manifest sincerity and reality, that he is doing it.

The correspondence is also of great interest as illuminating a par-

ticular moment in the history of Christian Hellenism. St John, at least in his longer and more studied letters, is deeply under the influence of what may be called the Stoic-rhetorical moral tradition. In studying his dealing with it, how it at times overmasters him and at times is subdued to an authentically Christian thought and expression, we can form some idea of the complexity of the situation of a Christian brought up in the ancient culture (itself a very complex thing). It is something which always has to be kept in mind when assessing the degree of authority to be given to the teaching of any particular Father, and the study of it can often be of great value in many ways to us in our still more complicated intellectual situation.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

THE MYSTICAL BODY AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. By Fr M. Eugene Boylan, O.C.R. (Mercier; 5s.)

The author of this essay has already made a well-deserved name for his spiritual writings. For that reason the book, of which the subtitle is 'The Foundation of the Spiritual Life', is rather disappointing and gives the impression of a successful author who is pushed forward too rapidly. The subject is of paramount importance and there is little in English to supply what the book sets out to provide. But the Papal Encyclical on the mystical body, often quoted at length, does not receive very much elucidation, and considerable space is occupied by the endeavour, so frequently made before, to describe the nature of the unity of Christ in his member, a unity called 'ontological' by Mersch, 'quasi-formal' by Mura. It would have been more in conformity with the title, as well as with the desire to convey the nature of the unity, had the author given far more space to the effect of the unity in the individual Christian who 'puts on' Christ, lives by *Christian* virtues, and suffers in the death of Christ on the cross. The identification of Christ with his members could in fact be traced in its spiritual effects right up to the transforming union of the highest and holiest Christian life. However, there are good things in the book, and the reader must remember that it is the first of a series edited by the capable theological learning of Fr James, O.F.M.Cap., so that it is designed to open the subject and raise the problems rather than to provide a complete guide to the spiritual life in terms of the mystical body. And there is a unique feature in the book in the *Publisher's* introduction; for the director of the Mercier Press takes the opportunity of stating the aims of his firm in recalling men to the spiritual life.

JOHN HUNSTER

LA SYNTHÈSE THOMISTE. Par P. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (Desclée; n.p.)

The interest of this tremendous contribution to the *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique* (here only slightly enlarged into a book of 740 pages) for readers of *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* lies in its synopsis of the

moral teaching, and therefore the spirituality, of St Thomas. The distinguished author, whose work in this field will probably merit his immortality in the history of theology, shows how the spiritual teaching of the Angelic Doctor is based firmly in the whole theological doctrine of the *Summa*, and he sketches the entire structure beginning in this section with Beatitude and ending with Christian Perfection and the Charismata, touching unfortunately by name only the pleasant social virtues of respect, veracity, affability and liberality. As a synthesis the book is exceptionally competent, as we should expect; but the author naturally intrudes his own interpretation from time to time as for example in the question as to whether Christ offers actually or only virtually in the Mass (p. 401). Thomists are to be found on both sides in this dispute, as indeed also in the most recent dispute on the nature of theology on which he adds an appendix.

JOHN HUNSTER

GOD THE FATHER. By Emile Guerry. Translated by A. H. C. Downes. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

Mgr Guerry's book, now made available to English readers in an excellent translation, is a series of meditations designed to foster devotion to God the Father, not in isolation from or to the exclusion of the other Persons of the Trinity, but as the One from whom they receive life; as the origin of all divine life, including sanctifying grace, the life of the soul. The spiritual life of the Christian is presented as an ascent towards the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit, a participation in the life of the blessed Trinity. We came forth from God as creatures; we return to him as sons, adopted into the family of God, brethren of him who was the Son of God by nature, having received the Spirit of the Son into our hearts crying 'Abba, Father'. The Christian virtue of religion must not only recognise God's right to be worshipped as Creator but also his right to be loved as a Father. Unfortunately for many Christians the Fatherhood of God remains a mere metaphor or abstraction having little or no influence on their spiritual lives, even though they may say the 'our Father' every day. Or the Father is only the terrible Judge, unapproachable except in fear; he whom an evilly-inspired art would depict to their childish imaginations as a formidable Ancient throwing an angry glance at them from a cloudy heaven! Those who may have been thus unhappily estranged from the Father either by thoughtlessness or as a result of 'childish imaginations' will find in these meditations the 'true face' of the Father as revealed to us by our Lord in the Gospels, not only in his power and majesty but more especially in his goodness, his mercy and his infinite goodness. Not that there is any wishy-washy sentimentality about the work. Both the plan and the treatment are strictly theological. Part I, Our Divine Family, is saturated through and through with Trinitarian doctrine while Part II, which outlines a spirituality based on devotion to the Father, treats of the theological virtues, the Mass, prayer, the Mystical Body.



We can endorse the words of the publisher's notice: 'Seldom can a work of spirituality have been so soaked in theology'. Withal there is a redolence of piety running through the whole. true piety, a tender and loving intuition of the Fatherhood of God, an appreciation of all that is implied in this name of 'Father', seeing in it all that Jesus revealed: 'the goodness, the mercy, and the loving-kindness of him who wishes to grant us a share in his life and make us really and truly his sons'.

It is this spirit of filial piety towards God as the 'living Father' which is so much needed by souls today, adrift as they are without help or hope in a seemingly meaningless maelstrom of existence. The loss of the realisation of God's fatherly care and providence has had its logical outcome in the loss of belief in God's very existence. From the stern and terrible God of the Jansenists to the abstract and absentee God of the philosophers was only a step in the inevitable evolution which has led to the godless movement of today. Only when men again become aware that they have a Father in heaven who loves them, and whose kindly providence protects their lives, and who out of pure mercy seeks to adopt them as sons, only then will it be possible to lead them back along the road which has taken them so far from God. Mgr Guerry's book will be of priceless value in encouraging Christians to turn again to contemplate the true revelation of the Father as unfolded by our Lord in his earthly life and teaching, and, having done so, to pass on the great message: *For the Father himself loveth you.* EGBERT COLE, O.P.

DAVID, *FIGURE DU CHRIST*, par J. Beaurin.

AMEN, par A.-M. Roguet, O.P.

LA PREFACE DE LA MESSE, par H.-Ch. Chéry, O.P.

LA PARABOLE DE L'ECONOMIE INFIDELE, par C. Spicq. (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars Publications; 1s. each.)

A series of excellent brochures from Editions du Cerf. Everything to recommend them; format and general presentation make the best use of what must be a limited range of coloured inks and paper. Theology is presented with a minimum of jargon; the appeal for liturgical awakening is temperate and keeps the ultimate purpose well in focus; an easy use of scriptural sources and a sound christian poetic sense all make admirable means of instruction. If these are representative of the series then everything is offered, homily, liturgical and theological instruction and meditation. G.M.

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### E X T R A C T S

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI and Charles de Foucauld are compared by Professor Deleaux in the September issue of *Vita Cristiana* (Florence).

Both have souls that are essentially Christocentric. The son of Piero Bernardone was immersed in the mystery of Christ: surely no other saint imitated as did he the life and sufferings of Christ, and

that in the most concrete and practical way. Charles de Foucauld, for his part, was dominated by a single passion: Jesus Christ. His life was Christ, and especially the Christ of the hidden years of Nazareth.

St Francis's journey to the Saracens anticipates, too, the special vocation of the Saharan hermit, and the foundation of the brotherhood designed to continue Charles de Foucauld's work has much in its rule that recalls the first Franciscan impulse.

WHAT DO YOU DO AT MASS? asks Père Duployé in *Témoignage Chrétien* (September 19). Echoing an appeal that one hears on all sides from the laity, he demands a serious consideration of the problem of preaching:

One can safely say that at present in France preaching is undergoing a serious crisis. Paul Claudel has reminded us that 'it is high time that the problem of preaching was studied from the point of view of the consumer'. How many Catholics go to church on Sunday morning with the hope of hearing from the lips of a priest the very secrets of life? At a time when the radio, the press, the cinema speak to the masses in a language that is too often pitifully inadequate, but which is at least intelligible, Christian preaching is marked by a fundamental unreality. The slightest word of the Gospel can change a life . . . but it is rare that the simple reading which, by itself, might be a shattering event, is undertaken in those conditions of audibility, dignity, beauty and intelligibility which could make of it a decisive act. The priest goes into the pulpit, and there pass over those indifferent heads the most solemn words as though they were empty of power and meaning, as though they had no reference to the mystery of daily existence.

The answer lies, Père Duployé argues, in the recovery of the Mass as a means of instruction. The most recent publication of the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique*, *La Messe et sa Catéchèse* (of which an account will be given in a subsequent issue of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT), is a basic work which deals with all the problems that face the reformer. Not the least of them is the problem of language, to which the latest number of *Maison Dieu* is also devoted.

In this country, too, the activities of the English Liturgy Society reflect the same concern, a pastoral concern primarily, for as Père Duployé reminds us:

All the possible objections have been made against the use of the vernacular (i.e. during parts of the Mass). No one will question a fact that we all agree about: the Sunday gathering of the faithful is, in certain parts, an instruction, a dialogue, a representation. Does one give a lesson in a language which the pupils don't under-

stand? Does one answer an enquirer in words he cannot comprehend without the help of an interpreter? Does one perform a play in speech that is unintelligible to those who are present?

SAINT-SULPICE, Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas, Notre-Dame-du-Raincy and Notre-Dame de Mantes, are the latest titles in the attractive *Nefs et Clochers* series (obtainable from Blackfriars Publications, 2s. each volume). An interesting text and brilliant photographs give fresh evidence of the contemporary French genius for communicating the joy of the Church.

PRAEGUSTATOR

LA MAISON-DIEU, Cahier II (Blackfriars Publications, 5s. 0d.) has 250 pages of detailed consideration of the problem of language and liturgical traditions. Articles on the past and present discipline of the Church are supplemented by an ample documentation on contemporary difficulties. The Abbé Martinort summarises an enquiry made by *Témoignage Chrétien* on the use of the vernacular in the liturgy. Hundreds of replies are analysed, from 'This is a wave of modernism' to 'The words of the Mass were not intended to be magic incantations'. The serious interest of priests and laity alike in the recovery of a living liturgy cannot be ignored. But knowledge must precede the hope of action, and the temperate and informed essays in this number of *Maison-Dieu* range from the practice of sub-apostolic times to modern German methods of translation. Père Roguet, O.P., has a most original and useful article on the terminology used in popular eucharistic sermons. 'The prisoner of the tabernacle', 'Jesus comes down on the altar', 'Bread of angels', and many more: these expressions must be 'animated by a living thought . . . must be fortified by the ever fresh resources of the Scriptures and the Liturgy, so that the preacher may be what he should always be—a prophet of the living God'.

## C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

To The Editor, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT:

Sir,—In your current issue (October) you publish an article by Sister Mary Frances, O.P., on Blessed Emily Bicchieri in which it is stated that 'girls prepared in such schools as hers went to the universities not only to learn but to become professors'. Mention is made of women professors at Alcalá and Salamanca and of women at the medical schools of Salerno, also that after the 'unfortunate incident' of Abelard and Heloise 'Paris closed her doors to women and Oxford followed her example'. I should be extremely interested to know the exact authority for these statements since they stand in direct contradiction to all that I have previously read concerning medieval universities.

That the celebrated women doctors of Salerno were mythical has



long been established: see *History*, October 1925 (vol. X, pp. 244-5), also Powicke and Emden's revised edition of *Rashdall's Medieval Universities* (O.U.P., 1955). This last contains very few references to the presence of women at the universities in any academic capacity: Alcalá is not mentioned at all in this connection, and Salamanca only on account of one learned woman some two centuries later than the period with which your article deals. The only specific mention of a woman engaged in teaching is in the section dealing with Florence, where a certain Clementia is named as '*doctrix puerorum*', who taught the rudiments of Latin in 1304. Had there been any great number of women professors such as your article suggests it is well-nigh impossible that they should have escaped mention in this standard work on the universities of medieval Europe.

In regard to Paris closing her doors to women early in the 12th century and Oxford's following suit, it is surely impossible to maintain that Paris at the time of Abelard was a 'university' in any but the most embryonic conditions? and it is certain that Oxford did not become recognisable as a university until at least the time of Giraldus Cambrensis. That either admitted women at any time seems untenable, and I should be grateful to know on what authority these statements are based.

Yours faithfully,

EDNA MONTER

Sir,—In answer to your correspondent with reference to my article on Bl. Emily Bicchiere, I can only say that I welcome the corrections due to her greater knowledge on the subject of women's place in medieval universities. I am no student of medieval history but merely a lover of the history of the Order of Preachers. My statements about women students and profosors in the middle ages are taken from *The Thirteenth, Greatest of the Centuries*, by J. J. Walsh, M.D., Ph.D., Ll.D., Litt.D. (Georgetown), Sc.D. (Notre Dame); New York; Catholic Summer School Press, 1913.

I believe I am correct when I say that girls educated by Bl. Emily and other Third Order sisters, with a view to their future life in the world, were given a different standard of education from that of the girl-novices in Dominican Contemplative monasteries, where the emphasis was laid on the spiritual rather than the intellectual; not that the latter was neglected. Well on in the 15h century there was a marked change, as the chronicles of monasteries and decrees of General Chapters clearly show.

Yours truly,

S. M. FRANCES, O.P.

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